



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

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September 18, 2020

Dear Fairfax,

CalTrans has parked a digital sign at the corner of Bolinas Road and Cascade Drive. Throughout the course of the last 6 months, the sign has displayed a variety of messages which I read every day on my way home. The first message was “Be Covid Safe, Wear A Face Covering”.

The messages are universal reminders. They are not meant to spark debate. This initial message was to remind us that face coverings are mandated by law, and to help us protect ourselves while respecting and protecting one another.

Over the last month, the PG&E digital sign board has added a series of messages.

As we were catapulted into an early, and what is projected to be an extended fire season, California is battling record breaking numbers of massive Wildfires. Climate chaos is accelerating and we are living in the hottest year on record.

The digital display has added “Air & Heat Advisory” & “High fire Danger”.

As we navigate the barrage of messages and heed their warnings, we are testing our adaptability. I continue to have faith that together we will emerge more resilient.

I was entering Cascade Canyon on my bike last week, I was cognizant that I experiencing digital sign, (and digital everything) fatigue and that the frightening messages were taking a toll on my psyche.

Much to my delight, the digital sign had added a message.

“Relax Be Nice”

I felt my shoulders drop away from my ears, my grip on my handlebars loosen and I imagined blue sky peeking through the smoke laden air where on previous trips home I had felt claustrophobic. I rode up Cascade Drive smiling and waving at neighbors, arrived home and gathered my family, and calmly pulled out my FIREsafe Marin Wildfire Evacuation Checklist.

This is certainly the time to stay calm and prepare and there are excellent resources to tap into to learn what steps to take.

Firesafemarin.org is a one-stop shop and a great place to start.

Fairfax continues to make progress on disaster preparedness and there is more coordinated and committed volunteerism than we have ever seen. There have been proactive steps taken by the Town over the years, such as expanding door to door curbside pick-up for increased numbers of Chipper Days,

and funding the first goat grazing program in 2019, but the work is daunting.

Thanks to emerging neighborhood leadership, our progress has greatly accelerated. We are deeply grateful.

To name a few of the ongoing programs:

*9 Fairfax neighborhoods have achieved Firewise USA status and are actively organizing, planning and educating their communities.

*We have hired a Coordinator for the growing number of Neighborhood Response Groups (NRGs) who's mission is to plan and prepare to respond to other potential disasters beyond just fire. The success of NRGs in other parts of Marin especially Central Marin is based on the social cohesion of neighbors in order to help look out for one another and our families when or if disaster strikes.

*The new neighborhood evacuation maps produced for every Fairfax neighborhood can be downloaded on the Town Website.

www.townoffairfax.org

We are in the process of listing all Firewise neighborhoods and a contact on the Town Website so that you will be able to connect with your Firewise steering committee and get involved. (coming soon)

We are moving in the right direction, and as we tackle the obstacles we face one by one, and the stressors seem unbearable, try to heed the wisdom written on the digital sign.

Renee Goddard

Mayor – Town of Fairfax

